

## Guidelines for Grants from “Small Church Sabbatical Fund”

A “sabbatical” concept is rooted in the Hebrew concept of the sabbatical year to be observed every seven years, allowing land to rest and lie fallow. The concept has been adopted widely within the academic community for a period of rest, study, and/or travel. More recently, the value of a sabbatical period for pastors has been recognized as providing benefit to both pastor and congregation and the ministry they share.

The Presbytery believes in this benefit, but recognizes that smaller membership congregations often find it is financially challenging to extend a sabbatical to their pastor. Consequently, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy has established a designated fund to offer financial support to congregations, with fewer than 200 active members, who grant sabbatical leave to their pastor. The grant is intended to support the cost of temporary pastoral leadership, including Sunday worship, moderating Session, and limited pastoral care.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Congregations with active membership of less than 200.  
Pastor must have served in this call/been in this position for at least 5 years.

**AMOUNT:** The congregation will receive \$225 per week during the sabbatical period granted by the Session. When the pastor is serving a call for a yoked parish, each congregation in the yoke will receive \$150 per week for the period of the sabbatical.

The sabbatical period is generally assumed to be at least six weeks, not to exceed 12 weeks/three months. If the pastor, with Session approval, chooses to combine a sabbatical period with the normal vacation or study leave time, the presbytery grant is not extended to cover those weeks for which the congregation is obligated under the terms of call/that additional time.

**OVERSIGHT:** Grants are to be awarded by COM. Applications should include:  
Written sabbatical plan by pastor indicating proposed benefit to pastor and benefit to congregation.  
Approval of sabbatical by Session.  
Identification of pastor secured for temporary leadership, if known. If not known, the application may request COM assistance in securing such leadership.

Approved: COM December 14, 2023  
Presbytery February 1, 2024